

COLUBER NAJA.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Scuta abdominalia.

Squamæ subcaudales.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 275.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS.

COLUBER FERRUGINEO-FLAVESCENS,
collo (plerumque) multum dilatato macula-
que supra conspicillata albo nigroque varia
notato.

Scuta abdominalia circiter 193.

Squamæ subcaudales 60.

Inter Europæorum commoda jure potest reputari serpentum venenosorum paucitas, qui in Indiæ et Africæ vastis regionibus, nec non in Americæ late patentibus desertis denso et horrendo dominantur agmine; nonnulli in exitium humani generis nimis, heu! lethaliter armati.

Omnes virulenti serpentes dentibus tubulatis venenum per foramen e sacco maxillari in vulnus infantibus, instructi sunt. Sunt tamen alii illis characteres quibus aliquatenus ab innoxiiis serpentibus distinguuntur.

tingui possunt. Notavit Dominus GRAY, in Aëis Anglicis plerosque venenosos serpentes caput latum, depressum, squamis minutis tectum habere; corporaque squamis carinatis, seu linea elevata notatis obducta: at e contrario, innoxiiis serpentibus, qui morfu tantum simplici lædunt, caput plerumque esse parvum, squamis magnis et latis adopertum, corpusque squamis lævibus, seu non carinatis. Hi autem characteres generales habendi sunt, nec sunt improvide et indubitanter recipiendi. Ita se rem habere species depicta exemplum est clarissimum. Est enim hic serpens inter pestiferos fere dirissimus; et tamen externis illis specierum perniciosarum characteribus non distinguitur; sed ut innocuo serpenti caput est illi plerumque parvum, squamis magnis tectum; corpusque squamis lævibus, seu non carinatis.

Tremendum hocce animal in India Orientali invenitur. Morsus ejus non minus quam Crotali funestus est. Ab Indiæ tamen incolis interdum capitur, et telis, seu dentibus tubulatis extractis (mirum dictu!) mansuescit, et in varios modos, ad domini nutum, velut saltans, se contorquet; et sæpe pro spectaculo exhibetur. Nota, quam in collo habet singularem, diversis speciminibus plus minus vivida est. Color etiam totius corporis in diversis aliquatenus differt. In longitudinem aliquot pedum interdum crescit hic serpens.

Cum monstra hæc, regiones calidiores orbis incolentia, animo occurrunt, gratulari nobismetipsis merito possumus de nostra securitate; et lubentissime anteponamus hyemis septentrionalis incommoda, pigrosque
campos

campos et diu infructuosos, perenni climatis æstati,
et floribus perpetuo ridentibus, quibus India utraque
superbit: at ubi, proh dolor! viator incautus, media
inter gaudia, fato subitaneo corripitur.

THE
SPECTACLE SNAKE,
OR
COBRA DE CAPELLO.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Transverse *Lamellæ* under the abdomen.
Broad alternate *Scales* under the tail.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

FERRUGINOUS-YELLOW SNAKE, with
the neck (generally) much dilated, and
marked above by a spectacle-shaped spot of
black and white.

The abdominal plates are about 193.

The subcaudal scales 60.

In Europe the noxious part of the serpent tribe is happily confined to a very few poisonous species; but the vast regions of India and Africa, and the extensive wilds of America, are infested by a variety of these dreadful reptiles; some of which are but too well provided with the fatal power of destroying mankind by their bite.

Such



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Such serpents as are of a venomous nature, are furnished with tubular fangs, or teeth, through which their poison, which is contained in reservoirs at the roots of the fangs, is injected into the wound. Besides the fangs, there are in general some external characters which may in some measure serve to distinguish the poisonous serpents from the innocuous ones: thus it has been observed by the ingenious Dr. GRAY, in the Philosophical Transactions, that the generality of poisonous serpents have a broad, depressed head, covered with small scales; and that their bodies are commonly covered with carinated scales, *i. e.* scales which have a prominent line upon them. On the contrary, the innocuous serpents, or such as can merely inflict a simple wound, have generally a smallish head, covered with large broad scales, and the body covered with smooth scales, or not carinated: but these are characters which admit of exceptions, and are merely to be regarded in a general view. The species here figured is a striking instance of this, and (as Dr. GRAY observes) is in every respect a complete exception to what has been said respecting the distinction between venomous and innocuous serpents; for though this is one of the most terrible of the whole tribe, yet it is not distinguished by those external marks of malignity which commonly characterize the poisonous species: on the contrary, it agrees with the innocuous serpents in having a smallish head, covered with very large scales; while the body is covered with smooth scales. This formidable animal is a native of the East-Indies. Its bite is not less destructive than that of the Rattle-Snake.

Snake. It is said however to be sometimes caught by the Indians, and after having its fangs drawn, to be in some degree tamed, so as to be taught to throw itself into various fantastic attitudes, as if dancing; and in this condition is often exhibited in India as a show. The very singular mark on the neck is much more apparent in some specimens than in others. The colour also of the whole body is deeper or lighter in different specimens. It grows to the length of some feet.

Reflecting on these horrid natives of the hotter regions of the globe, we may congratulate ourselves on our own happy state of security, and may well be willing to prefer the rigours of a northern winter, with a temporary loss of vegetation, to the continued warmth of climate, and ever-blooming verdure, which distinguish the beautiful regions of both the Indies; where alas! the incautious traveller may meet with sudden fate in the midst of the most enchanting scenes which nature can display.